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in the Hotel Commodore, New York City, under the auspices of "New Masses" to honor negroes and white Americans for their contributions toward an America of peace.

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A 1943 letterhead of the Book Union, Incorporated, 381 4th Avenue, New York City, reflects the name of one STERLING BROWN as being one of the Advisory Council.

The Book Union has been cited by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report of March 29, 1944, page 96, as being distributors of Communist literature.

Confidential Informant [redacted] of known reliability, advised on [redacted] that one STERLING BROWN [redacted]

[redacted] JAQUES ROUMAIN, recently deceased Haitian negro poet and ardent Communist.

Confidential Informant [redacted] of known reliability, advised that the Association of Democratique Haitienne and Friends of JAQUES ROUMAIN was completely controlled by the Communist Party.

SA [redacted] ascertained on March 27, 1953, that the files of the Bureau of Special Services and Investigation, New York City Police Department, reflect that the subject was listed as honorary Chairman of a banquet to be held at the Essex House on February 23, 1951, in honor of W. E. B. DuBOIS.

LOUIS F. BUDENZ, former Managing Editor of the "Daily Worker" and a Communist Party functionary until October, 1945, has described DuBOIS as a concealed Communist.

Confidential Informant [redacted] of unknown reliability, but who has furnished reliable information in the past, advised [redacted]

[redacted] He stated that he had no knowledge of any

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Communist tendencies on the part of the subject and as a matter of fact he has on occasion heard the subject express his dissatisfaction of PAUL ROBESON and ROBESON's activities. [redacted] further stated that the person who would know more about the subject's activities during the time he was at Vassar College was a former professor at Vassar by the name of [redacted]

[redacted]
He stated that it was his opinion that [redacted] would not have associated with the subject if the subject had shown any Communist tendencies at all.

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In June of 1950 LOUIS BUDENZ advised that PAUL ROBESON was known to him as a concealed Communist in the years prior to 1945.

Confidential Informants [redacted]
[redacted] all of known reliability, advised on March 26, 1953, that the subject was unknown to them.

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ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE (CONT'D)

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INFORMANTS (CONT'D)

Identity of Source	Date of Activity and/or	Description of Information	Date Received	Agent to Whom Furnished	File Number Where Located
[Redacted]	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report
NY 694-S	Negative		3-26-53	[Redacted]	Instant Report
[Redacted]	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report
	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report
	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report
	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report
	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report
	Negative	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Instant Report

MISCELLANEOUS

Six copies of this report has been designated for the Bureau inasmuch as referenced airtel reflects that this report may be disseminated.

REFERENCE

Airtel to Bureau and New York from Washington Field dated March 23, 1953.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-43964)
FROM : SAC, WFO (101-1381)
SUBJECT: STERLING ALLEN BROWN
SECURITY MATTER - C
LABOR - FEDERAL SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS
ACT OF 1953.

DATE: March 30, 1953

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Rebulet 3-3-53 "Employees of Howard University, Washington, D.C., Labor - Federal Security Appropriations Act of 1953", and bulet 3-6-53 bearing same caption as instant letter.

Enclosed are five copies of the report of SA dated March 30, 1953.

In accordance with instructions contained in rebulet 3-3-53 authority
is hereby requested to interview subject.

Re SAC letter #127, 12-5-52, Section (H) INTERVIEWS OF SUBJECTS
OF SECURITY CASES.

The following information, not included in the enclosed report, is offered for the Bureau's consideration:

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(5) There is no information available indicating membership or affiliation in subversive groups of any other close relatives of the subject.

SFP:jlf
Enclosures 5

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DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D.C.

PREFACE

In 1942 STERLING ALLEN BROWN was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the purview of Hatch Act, and in accordance therewith was interviewed under oath by a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The verbatim record of this interview will be set out in full in the MISCELLANEOUS Section of instant report.

During the Hatch Act investigation a number of associates, friends, neighbors, etc., of the subject were interviewed. Their general comments will also be reported in the MISCELLANEOUS Section. However, where these individuals made comments specifically applicable to the subject's activities and/or attitudes concerning various organizations of a Communist nature, those comments will be set out in the appropriate section and sub-section of this report relating to the specific organization involved.

This investigation reveals STERLING BROWN to be a poet, essayist, and literary critic of note, particularly in the field of Negro poetry. A number of his works have appeared in Communist publications and/or referred to in publications of this nature. On the other hand, numerous of the subject's contributions have appeared in publications not Communist in nature. Where the works appear or are referred to in Communist publications reference to same will be made in the appropriate section and sub-section of this report. In addition a section entitled STERLING ALLEN BROWN CONTRIBUTOR TO NUMEROUS OTHER PUBLICATIONS, is being devoted to a listing, from generally available sources, of subject's writings appearing in non-Communist publications.

BACKGROUND

Birth Data

The records of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, birth record number 109432, reveals that STERLING BROWN was born on May 1, 1901 at 2464 6th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Parents are listed as STERLING NELSON BROWN, and ADELAIDE BROWN, nee Allen, both born in Tennessee. Father's occupation is listed as clergyman.

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Citizenship Status

The subject is a United States citizen by virtue of his birth at Washington, D.C.

Education

The personnel files of Howard University, reviewed by SA [redacted] reveal that subject attended Williams College from 1918 to 1922 receiving a B.A. Degree. He also attended Harvard University 1922 to 1923 and 1931 to 1932 and is a recipient of a M.A. Degree.

Marital Status

According to a report of the Credit Bureau Incorporated dated September 14, 1950 the subject is [redacted] *[Signature]*

Military Service Record

There is no information available indicating the subject to have ever been a member of any branch of the military service.

Criminal Record

A check of the subject's name in the Criminal Arrest Records Section, Metropolitan Police Department reveals no record for the subject.

The subject's name was also checked in the Name Index Section of the Identification Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and no record was located.

Employment

The personnel files of Howard University reveal the following employment record for the subject:

1923 to 1926, teacher, Virginia Seminary and College, Lynchburg, Virginia.
1926 to 1928, teacher, Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri.
1928 to 1929, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee.
1929 to present. In 1929 subject entered on duty at Howard University at Washington, D.C. and in 1942 was elevated to the position of Associate Professor of English. He is presently a Professor of English. This employment was

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interrupted by periods of sabbatical leave
1931 to 1932 and 1937 to 1938. He was on
leave of absence from Howard University 1947
to 1948 for purpose of writing a book.
1934 to 1937 (summer sessions), visiting
professor, Atlanta (Georgia) University.
1936 to 1937, Editor on Negro Affairs, Federal
Writers Project (WPA).
1937 to 1938, Guggenheim Fellowship.
1945 to 1947 (September to December), Visiting
Professor, Vassar College, New York.

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Residences

The personnel file at Howard University reveals that in 1929
the subject was residing 2464 6th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. Washington,
D.C. city directories for various years since 1935 reveal the subject
to have since then been residing at 1222 Kearny Street, N.E., Washington,
D.C. which is his present residence address.

Status of Health

There is no information available indicating the subject to
be of other than normal health.

AFFILIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party, USA, has been cited by the Attorney General
as a subversive organization within the purview of Executive Order 9835.

[redacted] of unknown reliability, [redacted] to
the effect that STERLING A. BROWN was a member of the Communist Party
working directly out of the National Office of the Communist Party in
New York. He advised that subject did not belong to the Communist Party
of the District of Columbia in an effort to hide his party connection.

[redacted] reinterviewed in connection with the current investigation
of subject and specifically concerning the statement made by [redacted]
advised "I don't want to hurt Doctor BROWN." [redacted] stated that he did not
think he had made the statement attributed to him and that if he had made
it, it would have been untrue because he never knew the subject to have
been a member of the Communist Party. Further, [redacted] stated that if he
had made the statement in [redacted] it could not possibly have been meant in
the present tense because he would have been in no position to then know

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of Communist Party membership on the part of subject and would have had to have been in the past tense meaning that BROWN had been a member of the Communist Party prior to 1941. [redacted] summed up his views concerning Communist Party membership on the part of subject by stating that even if he knew that BROWN had been a member of the Communist Party in the past, [redacted] would not now admit same.

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[redacted] also stated that during the 1930's he was a student of the subject's at Howard University and had the usual student-instructor association and since then has had only casual intermittent contact with BROWN. This informant claims that he has never known BROWN to have been associated with any Communist front organizations and has no reason to question BROWN'S loyalty to this country.

[redacted]

[redacted] He stated then that subject likes to contemplate force and violence as well as claiming that the Negroes are persecuted. Informant advised that subject had often expressed to him his beliefs that revolution will bring a Sovietized South and that the hope for the Negro race to dominate the South lies in Communism. The informant, however, did not consider subject to be a dangerous individual.

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[redacted] a former professional associate of the subject at Howard University, advised [redacted] that he recalled specifically hearing BROWN criticize the "fickleness and whimsy of the Communist Party line".

[] then an associate of subject at Howard University, advised that BROWN'S poetry can not be called Communistic and BROWN has given no indication that he is sympathetic to the Communist Party. [] further stated that BROWN was said to have spoken in a meeting of some organization in Carnegie Hall, New York which meeting informant advised was reported to be sponsored by the Communist Party. Informant stated that he inquired of BROWN concerning this meeting and that BROWN replied he did not know whether or not this meeting was sponsored by the Communist Party but even if it were he, BROWN, was not a Communist.

Subject's comments concerning any alleged affiliation with the Communist Party, made during the 1942 Hatch Act interview by the FBI, will be set forth in the MISCELLANEOUS Section reporting the results of the Hatch Act interview.

AFFILIATIONS WITH ORGANIZATIONS CITED BY ATTORNEY GENERAL AS
WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9835

All organizations listed in the sub-headings of this section have been cited by the Attorney General as within the purview of Executive Order 9835.

American League for Peace and Democracy

Appendix IX of the published record of investigation of Communist front organizations by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 78th Congress, Second Session, contains as an exhibit a letterhead dated March 4, 1939 of the Washington Branch, American League for Peace and Democracy, 804 17th Street, N.W. Among the officials listed is the name of STERLING BROWN as one of the vice-chairmen. The files of the Special Investigations Squad, Metropolitan Police Department, contained as an exhibit to a report dated April 20, 1942, subject: American League for Peace and Democracy, a pamphlet printed by the Washington Branch of the subject organization listing the names of local officers. One of the vice-chairmen listed was the name of STERLING BROWN.

Subject's comments concerning alleged affiliation with this organization are contained in the MISCELLANEOUS Section of this report.

American Peace Mobilization

[] of known reliability advised that in 1940 the active indices of the Washington Chapter of the American Peace Mobilization contained the name "BROWN, STERLING - 1222 Kearny Street, N.E."

It is to be noted that the Washington Peace Mobilization has been cited by the House Committee on Un-American Activities as a Communist controlled organization.

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Subject's comment concerning alleged affiliation with this organization are contained in the MISCELLANEOUS Section of this report.

Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas

[redacted] of known reliability advised that around the latter 1930's or early 1940's the following notation appeared in the indices of the Commonwealth College which contained the names and addresses of students, teachers, campers, maintenance workers, visitors, and friends of the College:

STERLING BROWN,
Howard University,
Washington, D.C.

Notations: November 15, 1935;
teaches drama; Pd. Sub. exp December 1,
1936.

League of American Writers

The personnel file at Howard University reveals the subject to have been listed as a member of this organization.

Appendix IX of the House Committee on Un-American Activities record of inquiry into Communist front organizations contains as an exhibit a bulletin of the League of American Writers for the Summer of 1938 listing STERLING A. BROWN as a league member.

Testimony, by [redacted] before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in August, 1938 was to the effect that STERLING BROWN had been elected to the National Council of the League of American Writers.

The HCUA files contain the bulletin of this organization, "Congress Issue", Volume VI, No. 1, dated June, 1939, whereon page 12 the name of STERLING BROWN is listed as a member of the new National Board.

The Daily Worker, an east coast Communist newspaper, in its issue of April 30, 1935, page 2, contains a full page heading "Authors' Congress Forms League of American Writers." An article on this page relates that the newly formed league of American Writers evolved at a three day session of the American Writers Congress held at the New School for Social Research. One on the National Committee elected was indicated as STERLING BROWN, Negro poet.

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Concerning the American Writers Congress the HCUA has cited that EARL BROWDER, General Secretary of the Communist Party, was a speaker at the Second Biennial American Writers Congress in 1937; the Congress was sponsored by the League of American Writers.

The Daily Worker of December, 1936, page 5, column 4, in a column entitled "What's On" related that STERLING BROWN was to appear as a speaker at the Irving Plaza, 15 Irving Place, 8:15 PM, Monday December 14, on the subject "The Negro Character in American Literature" under the auspices of the League of American Writers.

In 1938 there was published in Washington, D.C. an eight page publication entitled "The Living Newspaper", Pierce Hall, Washington, D.C. Volume 1, No. 1, of this publication contained an article appearing on pages one and eight entitled "League in Successful, Co-operative Writing Venture". This article related to the Washington Chapter of the League of American Writers identified as the collective author of "Spanish Road", the Living Newspaper. Two pages of this publication is in the form of a program for a play entitled "The Spanish Road - A Living Newspaper" written by the Washington Branch, League of American Writers and sponsored by the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. STERLING BROWN is thereon listed as on the Executive Committee of the Washington Chapter League of American Writers.

It is noted that the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade has been cited by the HCUA as a Communist - Front organization.

Subject's comments concerning alleged affiliation with this organization are contained in the MISCELLANEOUS Section of instant report.

National Negro Congress

Appendix IX of the record of the HCUA hearings concerning Communist front organizations contains as an exhibit a "call for National Negro Congress" to be held at Chicago, Illinois February 14, 1936. One of the endorsers of the National Negro Congress from Washington, D.C. is listed as Mr. STERLING BROWN.

[] of known reliability advised around 1940 that Mr. STERLING BROWN of Washington, D.C. had been listed as an endorser of the National Negro Congress.

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[redacted] of known reliability, advised that in 1941 the name of [redacted] appeared in the active indices of the United American Spanish Aid Committee, an organization which has been cited by the Attorney General as within the purview of Executive Order 9835.

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Washington Committee for Democratic Action

[redacted] of known reliability, advised that in 1940 the name "BROWN, STERLING - Professor, Howard University, Washington, D.C." appeared on the membership list of this organization.

Subject's comments concerning alleged affiliation with this organization is contained in the MISCELLANEOUS Section of this report.

AFFILIATIONS WITH OTHER COMMUNIST INSPIRED GROUPS

American Congress for Peace and Democracy

The American Congress for Peace and Democracy has been cited as a Communist front by the HCUA. It was at this Congress that the American League for Peace and Democracy was formed.

The files of the Special Investigations Squad, Metropolitan Police Department contained the yearbook for the Fifth American Congress for Peace and Democracy held January 6 to 8, 1939 in the Rialto Theater, Washington, D.C. Therein is listed the name of STERLING BROWN as one of the sponsors for the Washington, D.C. Congress.

Book Union

The Book Union has been cited by the HCUA as a "distributor of Communist literature".

Appendix IX of the HCUA hearings contained an exhibit reflecting STERLING BROWN to have been a member of the Advisory Council of the Book Union Incorporated, 381 4th Avenue, New York City. Testimony before the HCUA in September, 1939 at Washington, D.C. [redacted]
[redacted] HCUA, was to the effect that STERLING BROWN was on the Advisory Council of the Union.

Federal Workers School (United Federal Workers of America)

[redacted] previously described has furnished a pamphlet announcing the 1937 Fall session of the Federal Workers School of the District of Columbia sponsored by the District Organizing Committee, UFWA. Among

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the lecturers listed was the name of STERLING BROWN, Poet, Guggenheim Fellow as a lecturer on contemporary literature.

[redacted] of known reliability, advised that [redacted] [redacted] He stated that in 1937 the Federal Workers School was operated and dominated from a managerial standpoint by three individuals known to this informant to have been members of the Communist Party at that time. The informant, however, pointed out that it was known to him that persons named in the catalogs and literature of this school, as being instructors and lecturers, etc., in some cases never actually appeared at the school as advertised. The school from time to time made announcements indicating they contemplated having certain individuals teach or perform other duties at the school and it was known that in many cases same did not come to pass.

AFFILIATIONS WITH, CONTRIBUTIONS TO, REFERENCES
IN - COMMUNIST PUBLICATIONS

Daily Worker

Issue of May 25, 1937, page 7, column 3, contains an article headed "United States Writers in Anthology". This article concerns a forth-coming anthology "American Stuff" to be published by the Viking Press and written by workers of various WPA Federal Writers' projects. Among the contributors was listed the name of STERLING BROWN.

Issue of January 24, 1939, page 7, column 6, contains an article headed "STERLING BROWN Speaks on Social Poetry". The article relates that STERLING BROWN noted Negro poet will talk on "The Poet as a Social Being" at the Ten Eyck Studio, 116 West 21st Street, New York City, January 25, 8:30 p.m. This meeting is indicated as sponsored by the Labor Poets of America.

The December 7, 1947 issue, page 7, contains a large advertisement concerning books on sale including "The Negro Caravan" edited by STERLING BROWN and others at the following book stores:

Workers Bookshop,
50 East 13th Street.
Jefferson Bookshop,
575 Avenue of the Americas.
44th Street Book Fair,
133 West 44th Street.
Club 65 Bookshop,
13 Astor Place.

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The Workers Bookshop will be characterized in a sub-section in this report bearing the same title.

Concerning the Jefferson Bookshop it is to be noted that its address is the same as that for the Jefferson School of Social Science, an organization cited by the Attorney General as within the purview of Executive Order 9835.

The April 26, 1949 issue of the Daily Worker, page 13, columns 3 and 4, contains an announcement of the Fourth Annual Conference of the Committee of Folklore in a Democracy to be held May 7, 1949 at New York City. It is indicated that STERLING BROWN, outstanding poet and folklorist, will speak on the subject "A Poet Looks at Folklore".

Daily Peoples World

The Daily Peoples World is a west coast Communist newspaper and has been cited by the House Committee on Un-American Activities as "the official organ of the Communist Party on the west coast".

The November 20, 1942 issue of this publication, page 5, columns 1 and 2, contains a column entitled "Just a Minute" by Marjorie (not further identified) in which is discussed an interview with STERLING BROWN noted Negro author and poet by the Oklahoma City Blade Dispatch.

Negro Quarterly

This publication was cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities "to be Communist initiated and controlled, or so strongly influenced as to be in the Stalin Solar System".

The March 31, 1942 issue of New Masses, page 26, contains an advertisement concerning the Spring 1942 issue of the Negro Quarterly and states that its contents include an article by STERLING A. BROWN entitled "The Negro Author and his Publisher".

New Masses will be appropriately described in the sub-section of this report of the same name.

The Daily Peoples World of May 6, 1942, page 5, columns 7 and 8, contain a review by JOHN PITTMAN of the Negro Quarterly - a review of Negro Life and Culture published by the Negro Publishing Society of America Incorporated, New York City. This review relates to the first issue of volume 1, Spring 1942 and states that the first article in this first issue "The Negro Author and its Publisher" by STERLING A. BROWN

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"attacks the two main obstacles with which the Quarterly's future is so directly bound - the obstacles of (1) discriminatory practices which deny Negroes apprenticeship opportunities in the writing craft, and (2) the defeatism of the Negro author who falls into self pity and stops trying to improve his craftsmanship. It is an informative, highly factual article, written with refreshing objectivity".

Appendix IX of the House Committee on Un-American Activities hearings contained a section concerning Communist Party and Communist Party line publications in which STERLING A. BROWN is identified as a contributor to the Negro Quarterly.

The main indices of the HCUA reflect that STERLING A. BROWN, writer, is the author of "Negro Author and His Publication", an article in the Negro Quarterly, the source for this information being the Daily Peoples World May 6, 1942, page 5, and the Young Communist Weekly Review, April 28, 1942, page 12.

Issues of the Young Communist Weekly Review available at the Library of Congress reflect it to be published by the National Board of the Young Communist League, an organization which has been cited by the Attorney General as subversive within the scope of Executive Order 9835.

New Masses

The Daily Worker for January 7, 1946, page 3, columns 1 and 2, contains an article entitled "Four Noted Americans to Receive Awards for Meritorious Work". This article relates two awards to be made at a dinner at the Hotel Commodore, New York City, January 14, and identifies STERLING BROWN as one of several distinguished figures to be honored by the New Masses magazine for their contributions toward greater inter-racial understanding.

The Daily Worker of January 16, 1946, page 8, columns 1 and 2, in an article headed "Twenty-two Peoples Heroes Honored" discussed the New Masses dinner at the Hotel Commodore which honored Negro and White Americans for their contributions towards an America for all peoples. Among those honored was STERLING BROWN "for his fighting poetry". The New Masses for November 18, 1947, page 7, contains a copy of a letter in which is described the New Masses Second Annual Cultural Awards Dinner to honor the American Negro which was held at the Hotel Commodore January 14, 1946. It is stated that STERLING BROWN was one of the candidates chosen by the editors of New Masses to receive an award given for the greatest contributions made to promote democracy and inter-racial unity.

New Masses was cited as a "Communist periodical" by former Attorney General FRANCIS BIDDLE, September 24, 1942. ✓

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The personnel file for the Howard University reveals that in a questionnaire executed by the subject, he stated that he had written reviews and essays in a number of periodicals including New Masses.

The subject's comments concerning alleged affiliation with this publication will be contained in the MISCELLANEOUS Section of this report.

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Workers Book Shop

It is to be noted that the Workers Book Shop, 50 East 13th Street, New York City, is located in the same building housing the Communist Party Headquarters and other Communist front groups.

[redacted] of known reliability, has advised that the Workers Book Shop is under control of the Communist Party.

The files of the House Committee on Un-American Activities contained a catalog of the Workers Book Shop for sale by that establishment April, 30 to May 15, 1948 and another catalog for this organization for the year 1949 to 1950. In both these catalogs there appears an advertisement for "The Negro Caravan" edited by STERLING A. BROWN and others.

STERLING A. BROWN CONTRIBUTOR TO NUMEROUS OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The personnel file concerning subject maintained at Howard University reveals a lengthly listing of the subject's writings. A portion of these listings is set out below:

The subject has written a poem entitled "Sam Smiley" which appeared in the Crisis, March, 1932.

The subject has written the following books:

"Southern Road", a book of poems published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York City, 1932.

"The Negro in American Fiction" (Bronze Booklet #6) published by Associates in Negro folk education, Washington, D.C. June, 1938.

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"No Hiding Place", a book of poems completed and submitted for publication in April, 1938.

Articles written by the subject included the following:

"Negro Character as Seen by White Authors", Journal of Negro Education, April, 1938.

"Caroling Softly Souls of Slavery", Opportunity, August, 1931.

"Unhistoric History", Journal of Negro History, April, 1930.

In a questionnaire the subject stated he has written reviews and essays in the following periodicals:

Opportunity
The Christian Century
The New Republic
The Nation
Journal of Negro History

He has written poems in the following:

The Crisis
Folk - Say
Esquire
Theater Arts
Opportunity
Race
New Republic
Nation
Partisan Review and Anvil
New Challenge
Palms

Book reviews by the subject were listed as:

"Luck is a Fortune", a review of "Their Eyes were Watching God" by Zora Neale Hurston, The Nation, October 14, 1937.

"From the Inside", a review of "Uncle Tom's Children" by Richard Wright, The Nation, April 16, 1938.

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The main index at the Library of Congress reveals the subject to have been the author of the following works:

"The Negro Caravan" writings by American Negroes, selected and edited by STERLING A. BROWN, Howard University and others published by the Dryden Press, New York City, 1941. On pages 381 to 391 of this book there appears a biographical sketch of the subject and several poems written by him.

"Negro Poetry and Drama" by STERLING A. BROWN, Professor of English, Howard University.

"Outline for the Study of the Poetry of American Negroes", prepared by STERLING A. BROWN for use with "The Book of American Negro Poetry" edited by James Weldon Johnson. The latter publication contains several of the subject's poems. The Outline was published in 1931 by Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.

"James Weldon Johnson" published by the Department of Publicity, Fisk University. This book is in the form of a tribute to Johnson by three authors, one being STERLING A. BROWN, whose contribution is entitled "The Negro in American Literature".

The Readers Guide to Periodical Literature for the periods 1910 to date were checked at the Library of Congress and it was revealed that the subject's works have appeared in the following periodicals:

Partisan Review contains two poems entitled "Transfer" and "Southern Cop".

Nation August 26, 1939 contains "Bitter Fruit of the Tree", a poem.

New Republic, May 11, 1938 and Scholastic, April 29, 1940 contains "Break of Day", a poem.

Scholastic, April 29, 1940 contains "Glory, Glory", a poem.

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Scholastic, May 21, 1938 contains a biographical sketch of subject and some of his poems including "Slim Lands a Job".

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Poetry, July, 1938 contains poems by members of the Federal Writers Project including "Young Ones", a poem by the subject.

New Republic, November 18, 1938 contains a poem "Master and Man".

Theater Arts Monthly, February, 1932 contains "Sporting Beasley", a poem.

MISCELLANEOUS

Associates

[redacted] of known reliability, advised that arrangements were made for the attendance by STERLING A. BROWN in company with others for the Doctor W.E.B. DuBois Testimonial Dinner to be held at the Essex House Hotel, New York City, February 23, 1951. [redacted] was unable to state whether the subject actually attended this affair.

[redacted] of known reliability, has advised that Doctor W.E.B. DuBOIS was a member of the Communist Party in 1945.

[redacted]

[redacted] advised SA [redacted]
[redacted] that she had known Professor STERLING A. BROWN [redacted]
[redacted] and believed they were loyal to the United States, had no sympathy for Communism and Fascism and, as far as she knew, belonged to no organizations.

WFO 101-1381

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The records of the Registrar's Office, Howard University, checked by SA [redacted] reflect that Professor STERLING A. BROWN is listed as the [redacted]

Interview with STERLING A. BROWN

On March 31, 1942, STERLING ALLEN BROWN was interviewed by Special Agent [redacted] in the presence of [redacted] Federal Bureau of Investigation, and gave the following signed statement.

Statement of STERLING ALLEN BROWN, made in the presence of Special Agent [redacted] Federal Bureau of Investigation. Questions by [redacted]

Q. Mr. BROWN, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been charged with the duty, by Congress, of investigating Federal employees who are alleged to be members of subversive organizations or who advocate the overthrow of the Federal Government, and to report its findings to the Congress. The purpose of this interview is to afford you an opportunity to answer questions concerning alleged activities on your part, and you may make any statement that you consider pertinent.

A. I will be happy to.

Q. The questions that I am about to ask you may be answered if you so desire, and a copy of the report of this investigation, including any statements you make, will be furnished to the agency that employs you. In order that your statement may have particular credence, you will be placed under oath. Do you have any objection to that?

A. I have no objection to it. I am curious about the alleged activities. I would be happy to talk under oath.

Q. Will you stand and raise your right hand, please? Do you solemnly swear that the statements you are about to make will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

A. I do. There is one question I would like to ask. If it is a matter of uncertainty, I am not going to swear that a point—it is possible in this to say that at the time I don't know this, that, or the other, provided you get a clear-cut answer on the general business.

X

WFO 101-1381

Q. What is your home address, please?

A. 1222 Kearny Street, N.E.

Q. MR. BROWN, are you at the present time or have you ever been a member of the National Negro Congress?

A. I have been a member of that, yes.

Q. Would you care to state the extent of your activities in that connection?

SAB things

A. My membership is one of many in Negro organizations. When the Negro Congress was set up I was behind its purposes. I was not one of those who set it up. When I learned of the purposes--I have done a whole lot of SAB joining in the sense of giving two dollars to somebody who comes in, supporting I like things-I-do. I didn't do any investigating of the organizations. I was generally a pretty busy person, with my home work. I am anxious to write and I am a student of literature and I am a teacher. I joined the Negro Congress because of my very great interest in all efforts to help the lot of the American Negro, and that was one of them. I likewise belong to other Negro organizations--the National Association for Colored People and groups of that sort. If I have two dollars or five dollars I send it. I have never been active in the Negro Congress and I have never done any investigating of its alleged tie-ups with subversive groups.

Q. Can you approximate the number of meetings of the organization at which you have been in attendance?

SAB
did so

A. I have been asked to speak at meetings, largely because, I think, of the subject that I have worked a great deal on. That is, literature about the Negro and literature by the Negro, and that is a popular subject with that type of group, and I spoke at one meeting on that in Philadelphia. I never attended any of these what you would call the ordinary meetings. SAB I think I gave one talk for-that. I/read-some-poems at a meeting in a Washington church and (was asked to read some/poems). The name of the church I have forgotten. It was a Washington church. I would say my attendance has been very small at those affairs. Only those two come to my mind; there probably were others. I have never been at the important meetings of policy or anything of that sort. I don't feel myself to be an active member of that and never did, but I have contributed and I am probably still on the list. I would probably still give two dollars to this program, that, or the other.

Q. MR. BROWN, are you at the present time or have you ever been a member of the Washington Committee for Democratic Action?

A. No.

WFO 101-1381

Q. Have you ever been requested to serve as a sponsor for that organization?

A. No. Not that I remember. I have had nothing to do with that organization. You see, many of these organizations after the Dies Committee investigation—I did not agree with all of the implications that I thought were made by the Dies investigation, but I was not going to gamble on whether this investigation was true or not. That is, the matter of the tie-ups with Communism, etc., and my attitude on Russia changed with several factors. I don't suppose you want that right now. I suppose that will come later, in due course of time, but—the war line-up—after the Finland push and the Hitler tie-up, I was alienated from any—well, I did not want any tie-up with Communism or anything of that sort because I was very much anti-Hitler and I think much of my interest in organizations of this type has been a very great hostility to Hitler and to Mussolini, and so most of my membership in organizations was before the present crisis. I did belong to the League for Peace and Democracy.

Q. Are you at the present time a member of the American People's Mobilization, which was formerly known as the American Peace Mobilization?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever attended any meetings of that organization?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever made any financial contributions?

A. No.^I/never was for any peace mobilization after the war started. I am not talking about the American participation, I am talking about after Hitler went into Poland. I have never been an Isolationist or anything of that sort.

Q. MR. BROWN, are you at the present time or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

A. No. Never have been.

Q. Have you ever had any connections with the Communist Party in New York City?

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A. I never have. I have subscribed to the New Masses at different times. I did that away back when the New Masses was started. I was a teacher of literature in Virginia. I was very interested—I still am—in American culture and American literature and the currents of American thought. I was a teacher at a small school where there was no good library. I used to take all sorts of magazines. I was right out of college and I was as interested as a person could be in a world with which I hadn't had much contact. I used to take all the magazines—The Nation, SAB and, when the New Masses started, I took that. Since the New Masses I could started I have taken it occasionally. I have never been associated, however, with any of its political policies.

Q. You mentioned the publication, New Masses, MR. BROWN. Do you consider that to be a Communist publication?

A. I have felt that its support of the Communist Party would make it seem sympathetic. I don't know any of its formal connections. I think it is sympathetic to the Communist Party.

Q. MR. BROWN, do you recall having spoken at any meetings of organizations in New York City which were sponsored by the Communist Party?

SAB
an invitation to speak

A. No. I don't know any sponsorship that the Party has given to any of this kind of thing. I have spoken in New York City under all kinds of auspices. I have been teaching at Howard and I have known of Howard's semi-relationship with the Government and so forth; I would not have taken ~~a speech~~ if I had known it was sponsored by the Communist Party. I would not have taken it if I had known it was sponsored by the Socialist Party or any of the other parties of that sort. I have never been tied up politically with any of those groups. I may have spoken at groups that were said to have been sponsored, but I never spoke at a group that I knew was sponsored or that it was told to me they sponsored.

Q. MR. BROWN, are you at the present time or have you ever been a member of any organization which you have reason to believe is dominated by the Communist Party or its policies dictated by a foreign government?

SAB
in that organization

A. I have belonged to organizations of which that has been said. But during my membership I never saw that. I never was a very active member in the sense of knowing policies or seeing where they came from. I mean, I am not a voting, arguing type of member. I have been teaching and am not a good man for that sort of thing. I have belonged to groups that, according to the Dies investigation, were under such dictation as you mentioned. I did not know that and I have never seen any evidence of that. I belong to no such group now. I did belong to the League for American Writers. ~~I suppose that my name is still on the books.~~ I haven't participated for years. The League for American Writers was said by Dies to be such an organization. I have never seen any evidence of it, but again I certainly did not search for that, and my contact was slight. I have never been an active member in organizations.

Q. I have no further questions. Is there any further statement you care to make?

the

A. Well, another organization of ~~that sort is the same thing~~ as I have said-- SAB is the League for Peace and Democracy, which I belonged to in Washington. The two causes were certainly causes that I believed in--a defense of peace and democracy/before the war started in Europe. It was an organization of which the principles appealed and I joined. I am not-- I was not a very active member of any of these. I am not pleading ~~any~~ my inactivity as not being behind it. It's ~~the person and sort of~~ (more my personality and) the fact that my time is crowded. I am teaching and am trying to write. I am not a man for meetings. It is much more easy to get two dollars or five dollars out of me, and I let it go at that, so that organization I belonged to. That, too, I understand, was under suspicion by Congressman DIES. I will state ~~that~~ for the record. (I don't know whether you asked me any questions on it.) I have never belonged to any political party. I think that politically I would be a New Deal Democrat (I have never voted because I am a citizen of Washington). I have gotten, I suppose the reputation as a radical because of my position on the race matter in America, and I definitely believe that democratic rights and privileges should come to all people, regardless of race or religion, and SAB my writing has frequently stated that. And in America when a Negro ~~it is~~ states something of that sort he is considered radical. I mean/~~the~~ assumed position of the Negro should be perhaps more conservatively stated, ~~but~~ than (sometimes) I have/stated it in my writing. I am perfectly willing for the things that I have written to be thoroughly investigated for ~~where~~ type of I stand. I think that that would be an indication more than this/mem^{type of} SAB bership/which, thought not accidental, is certainly not an important thing in my life; but my books are available and I would be glad to give the names of them.

My advocacy of peace was SAB

SAB

in organizations

Q. I might ask this further question, MR. BROWN: have you ever advocated change in the constitutional form of government?

A. I am glad you asked that. There is nothing in my beliefs of subversion. I was not surprised to be called down here, but I was surprised at being tied up with subversive activities. I would never advocate a change by violence in the American system. My complaints of the treatment of the SAB Negro in America do not mean that there is any place where he is treated better. ~~badly~~. It is that within a democratic framework he could be treated better. In this crisis I am all-out for it, and I think it is tragically silly for a person not to be all-out for the victory of the United States. My great hatred is for what Hitler wants and for what Mussolini wants. I am all-out behind this war. I believe that changes for the better will come. I have seen some of them, and I believe that they will come in our way of government. I do not believe that those changes will

~~SECRET~~
~~REF ID: A6511~~

come for the better by violent revolution. I think that they will come as they are coming and as they have come. That is my position. I have never joined any organization advocating the overthrow of the American Government, and I would not do it. I have been tied up with organizations that have been so alleged, because of sympathies with certain things that they are doing. For instance, the matter of the race inequality problem in the South and the matter of the Negro problem throughout the nation. Groups like that have come out for those causes and I have supported them in my own way, which has been a rather small way, but I think the causes are important; But I have never advocated overthrow of the Government. It is a long answer to your question, but I wanted the record straight on that.

Q. Do you have anything further, MR. BROWN?

A. I feel I can talk better with questions. I am writing books. There is a whole lot that is pressing. There is a whole lot that's on my mind, and I don't want to just let it go. I would rather answer questions about it that might give you some benefit or help or insight.

Q. Well, I have no further questions. I believe I have covered the subject I am interested in.

A. I don't know whether my position is clear. This will have to be taken for what it is worth--but I look upon myself as working within a democratic framework for the improvement of democracy in the ways where it means most to me. Since I am a Negro, I would be most interested in the welfare of my own people. Since so many Negroes are poor, I would be interested in such things as labor improvement, the sharecropper situation, etc.; but I think that those improvements can be attained in America that is a democracy, and I think that they won't be attained if we don't win this war, so I am for the winning of this war.

Q. MR. BROWN, you may have the opportunity, if you wish, of reading a transcript of this interview and of signing it, if you wish. It is entirely within your discretion.

A. I should like to see the transcript, of course.

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/s/ STERLING A. BROWN

Witness:

[Redacted]

F.B.I. Wash. D.C.

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Comments by Associates, Friends, etc., Concerning Subject
Made During Hatch Act Investigation in 1942

All of the interviews reflected in this sub-section were conducted by Special Agent [redacted]

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[redacted] stated that BROWN is an individual who spends most of his time studying and writing and did not appear to be an individual who would be concerning himself with any political movements. He advised that BROWN's father was a former dean at Howard University and stated he had no indication that BROWN is a member of any alleged subversive organization and that he had never heard BROWN make any statements which would indicate he advocated the overthrow of the government by force of arms.

(✓) general

[redacted] BROWN [redacted] stated that subject is a poet and as such may have contact with Communists or even Nazis through interest in poetry but that subject's contact would strictly be confined to his interest in poetry and not any interest of a political nature. Informant stated he believed BROWN is fundamentally a substantial individual and good American citizen and does not think BROWN was ever connected with any subversive or radical organizations. [redacted] remarked that BROWN'S interests are confined to poetry and he has often spoken on Negro poetry and literature and might have spoken before questionable groups, but that his interest at all times was confined to the matter of literature and poetry.

[redacted] described previously, [redacted] that BROWN had first concerned himself with writing poetry concerning the folklore of the Negro people. According to [redacted] BROWN was advised that in order that his poetry would receive National recognition it would be necessary for him to write his poetry concerning matters of a social nature. BROWN thereafter developed a view of social consciousness and as a result became more broad in his associations and undoubtedly came in contact with people having Communist tendencies. This informant stated he could not say that BROWN was a member of any alleged subversive organization but that he knew BROWN was always in demand to speak concerning Negro prose and poetry. Informant remarked that subject is a willing performer and accepts all invitations to speak. Informant expressed the fact that he feels certain that BROWN is not radical or a Communist and opined that BROWN is a loyal American who is outstanding as a critic and writer of Negro literature and as such is in demand to speak on these topics and is unable to make an emphatic refusal when asked to do so.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~INITIAL~~

[redacted] mentioned previously, advised that subject, [redacted] [redacted] has great sympathy for lower classes and has written much regarding them. During numerous speaking engagements BROWN has come in contact with many "movements" but [redacted] does not think BROWN was interested politically in any. According to this source BROWN would speak on Negro poetry and prose on any occasion when invited to do so but at the present time (1942) he was more careful since the issues of Communism have been more publicized.

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[redacted] advised she had never heard him make any statements which would make him indicate he was sympathetic with any subversive groups and that she had heard him on many occasions speak about Negro art, music, poetry, and folklore.

[redacted] advised that at no time had she ever received any indication that BROWN was a member of any subversive group or advocated the overthrow of the government by force of arms.

[redacted] advised that [redacted] BROWN never gave any indication he was a member of any alleged subversive organization and that she had never heard anyone [redacted] make any allegations that BROWN was not a loyal American.

[redacted] Kearny Street and that she had never heard BROWN [redacted] make any statements which would indicate that they were not loyal Americans or that they are associated with any subversive organization. She stated that BROWN does not hold any meetings in his home and as far as she has been able to observe he is a patriotic American citizen.

Current Informant Contacts

The following informants all of known reliability and each of whom has been acquainted with certain phases of Communist activities in the Washington, D.C. area for varying degrees of time, some dating back to the 1930's and others to the present time, were contacted concerning the subject [redacted]

All these informants advised that the subject [redacted] are unknown to them.

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WFO 101-1381

[redacted] an admitted former member of the Communist Party, advised that the subject [redacted] are unknown to him.

[redacted] of known reliability who was a member of the Communist Party in Washington, D.C. from 1943 to 1949, and at varying times held official positions with the Communist Party, advised SA [redacted] that the subject [redacted] are unknown to her.

Agency Checks

The files of [redacted] other government agencies conducting personnel investigations, contained no additional pertinent information.

The files of the Credit Bureau Incorporated contained no information of pertinence to the subject's loyalty.

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WFO 101-1381

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ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

Investigation in this matter was requested of the New York Division by Airtel dated March 23, 1953.

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AGENCY CHECKS

Metropolitan Police Department
Criminal Arrest Records

checked by SE [redacted]
[redacted] March 24, 1953.

Credit Bureau Incorporated

checked by SE [redacted]
[redacted] March 16, 1953.

INFORMANTS

<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>SA to whom Furnished</u>	<u>File Number Where Located</u>
[redacted]	Alleged CP membership of subject in 1941.			100-2286-2
	Current reinterview with informant.			instant report
	Alleged CP membership of subject.			101-1381-10
	Current reinterview with informant.			101-1381-15
	Federal Workers School Catalog			65-1492-1C2
	Comments regarding subject's attitude toward CP line, National Negro Congress and general comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7

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WFO 101-1381

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

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<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>SA to whom Furnished</u>	<u>File Number Where Located</u>
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[Redacted]

Comments regarding subject

[Redacted] 101-1381-7

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anonymous source

[Redacted] Subject's name in [Redacted]
[Redacted] indices Commonwealth
furnished College
index cards of Commonwealth College, Mena, Ark.

LR-100-355-3

[Redacted]

Subject endorser of National Negro Congress

[Redacted]

CG 100-1524-3,
page 7

Subject speaker at Washington Bookshop Symposium 11-17-44

[Redacted]

100-1618-262

anonymous source

[Redacted]

anonymous source

[Redacted]

Characterization of Workers Bookshop (as reflected in report of SA [Redacted])

[Redacted] 1-19-50 at Chicago [Redacted]

[Redacted] was Esp-R".)

[Redacted]

Characterization of Dr. W.E.B. DuBOIS

LOUIS BUDENZ

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WFO 101-1381

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>SA to whom Furnished</u>	<u>File Number Where Located</u>	
	Comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7	b2 b6 b7C b7D
	Comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7	
	Comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7	
	Comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7	

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WFO 101-1381

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

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<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>SA to whom Furnished</u>	<u>File Number where Located</u>	
	Comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7	b1 b2 b6 b7C b7D
	Comments regarding subject.			101-1381-7	
	Subject [redacted] unknown to informant				instant report
	Subject [redacted] unknown to informant				instant report
	Subject [redacted] unknown to informant				instant report
	Subject [redacted] unknown to informant				instant report
	Subject [redacted] unknown to informant				instant report
	Subject [redacted] 3-18-53 unknown to informant		[redacted]		instant report

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WFO 101-1381

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ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

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<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>SA to whom Furnished</u>	<u>File Number Where Located</u>
[Redacted]	Subject [Redacted] unknown to informant	[Redacted]	[Redacted] orally	instant report
	No record of subject.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	instant report
	No additional information regarding subject.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	instant report
	Subject [Redacted] unknown to informant. Characterization of Federal Workers School.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	101-1381-16
	Subject's planning attendance Dr. W.E.B. DuBOIS testimonial dinner.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	65-3956-1A3
anonymous source				

LEADS

THE WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE:

AT WASHINGTON, D.C.:

Will interview subject and report results thereof; authority for interview being requested in separate cover letter accompanying this report.

Will submit amended administrative pages reflecting documentation information requested by separate letter of the Chicago and Little Rock Divisions.

Will upon interview secure complete physical description of subject and report same.

CONFIDENTIAL

WFO 101-1381

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

REFERENCE: Bureau letter March 3, 1953 "Employee of Howard University, Washington, D.C., Labor - Federal Security Appropriations Act of 1953".
Bureau letter March 6, 1953 "STERLING ALLEN BROWN, Security Matter - C, Labor - Federal Security Appropriations Act of 1953".

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-43964)

DATE: April 8, 1953

FROM : SAC, WFO (101-1381)

SUBJECT: STERLING ALLEN BROWN
 SECURITY MATTER - C
 LABOR - FEDERAL SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS
 ACT OF 1953
 (O.O. WFO)

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Rerep SA [redacted] dated March 30, 1953,
 at Washington, D. C., and rerep [redacted] March 30,
 1953, New York City.

First paragraph, Page 3, re New York report reflects
 that according to the report of a hearing before the HCUA,
 76th Congress, Page 5508, one STERLING BROWN was listed as
Executive Secretary of the American League for Peace and
 Democracy in September, 1939. This office has examined Page 5508
 of this report and it was found that one [redacted]

[redacted] STERLING BROWN
 were listed as Vice Chairmen. It is requested the New York
 Office submit an amended Page 3 of its report.

Sixth complete paragraph, Page 5, and first complete
 paragraph, Page 6, of the New York report contained information
 from LOUIS BUDENZ identifying W. E. B. DU BOIS and PAUL ROBESON,
 respectively, as having been known to BUDENZ as concealed
 Communists. Second complete paragraph, Page 17, of the WFO
 report contains information from [redacted] (LOUIS BUDENZ) identifying
 DuBOIS as a CP member.

It will be noted that the New York report set forth
 BUDENZ' information as coming from him, whereas the WFO report
 covered BUDENZ' identity with the use of a T-symbol. WFO's use
 of this concealing device is based upon information contained in
 New York's letter to the Director July 9, 1951, in the matter
 [redacted]

wherein [redacted] it was suggested that BUDENZ
 be given a temporary confidential informant symbol in connection
 with his identity of concealed Communists.

The New York Office is requested to advise whether its
 suggestion of concealing BUDENZ' identity is still necessary or
 whether he may be referred to openly in a report. In the event
 it is still necessary to conceal BUDENZ' identity it is requested
 the New York Office submit amended pages five and six to its report.

RECORDED-52

INDEXED-52

SFP:LEB
cc - (2) New York (100-113603) (RM)

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- 14

WFO 101-1381

In the event BUDENZ' identity need not be concealed, WFO will submit amended pages to its report. It is believed the foregoing is necessary to maintain consistency in reporting BUDENZ' information, particularly in view of the dissemination which will be made of those reports. P.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-43964)

DATE: April 14, 1953

FROM : SAC, WFO (101-1381)

SUBJECT: STERLING ALLEN BROWN
SECURITY MATTER - C
LABOR—FEDERAL SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS
ACT OF 1953

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Rerep of SA [redacted] at Washington, D. C.,
dated March 30, 1953, in captioned matter.

Bureau authority is requested to interview subject.

P.

EPB:LEB

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Submit results in report
Date 7-28-53

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI (100-4396)
FROM *LW* SAC, New York (100-113603)

DATE: April 24, 1953

SUBJECT: STERLING ALLEN BROWN
SECURITY MATTER - C
LABOR - FEDERAL SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS
ACT OF 1953
(OO: WFO)

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Re WFO letter to Director, 4/8/53.

Submitted herewith are 6 copies each of amended pages 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9 of the report of SA [redacted] 3/30/53, New York. It is requested that the Bureau and WFO insert the amended pages in above mentioned report. Amended pages have been inserted in NY office copies. RUC.

Encls. - 30

1 - Washington Field (101-1381) (Encls. - 15)

RECORDED - 2

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
441897 SP38TJ/RD

FBI - MAY 14 1953

25

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-43964)

DATE: May 18, 1953

FROM : SAC, WFO (101-1381)

R/B
copy

SUBJECT: STERLING ALLEN BROWN
SECURITY MATTER-C
LABOR - FEDERAL SECURITY
APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 1953
(OO WFO)

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informed = 1953!

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Enclosed herewith are five copies of the report
of Special Agent [redacted] dated May 18, 1953,
in captioned matter.

Although the enclosed report is designated as pending,
the only outstanding lead is to submit amended pages to
complete documentation. When same has been completed this
matter will be closed by letter to the Bureau.

Please be advised that the interviewing agents found
the subject to be most cordial and extremely cooperative.
He gave every indication of being candid in his views and
appeared to be a rather outspoken individual, thus permitting
an even better than normal insight into his views. It
appears from a review of the results of the investigation
which has been conducted to date plus the result of the
interview with subject, that no further investigation is
warranted and UACB none will be conducted.

P.

SFP:GG
ENCLS. (5)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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DATE 11-18-97 BY SP3 BTJ/RW
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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT WASHINGTON FIELD

~~SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL~~

REPORT MADE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 5/18/53	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 5/4-8, 11, 12/53	REPORT MADE BY GC/ab
TITLE STERLING ALLEN BROWN		CHARACTER OF CASE SECURITY MATTER - C LABOR - FEDERAL SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 1953	

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS: <i>2nd interview BROWN's explanations LIT. KAT. of OJAN!</i> <i>Photo Col A 4-5-61 P-</i> <i>C BY: JWM yr</i> <i>AGENCY photo - USIA REQ. REC'D 4-22-59 REP'T FORM 5-11-59 BY</i> <i>ON 4-18-97 SP3 BTJ/RW</i>		<p>STERLING ALLEN BROWN interviewed May 7, 1953. Advised he has never been a Communist, has never had any affiliation with or sympathy for the Communist Party and has never adhered to its principles such as the advocacy of the use of force and violence to overthrow the government. BROWN's explanations for former affiliations with numerous Communist front groups set forth. Claims to have never been aware of these organizations being controlled by the Communist Party during the time of his association. Physical description set out.</p> <p><i>D 2nd interview On hi</i></p> <p><i>b6 b7C</i></p> <p><i>Photo Col A 4-5-61 P-</i></p> <p><i>C BY: JWM yr</i></p> <p><i>AGENCY photo - USIA REQ. REC'D 4-22-59 REP'T FORM 5-11-59 BY</i></p> <p><i>ON 4-18-97 SP3 BTJ/RW</i></p> <p><i>2nd interview Re Section III, AEC-A 116-426931</i></p> <p><i>DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES</i></p> <p><i>100 P- 117</i></p> <p><i>MAY 20 1953</i></p> <p><i>SECRET</i></p>	
APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <i>RBH JWM</i>		SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 - Bureau (100-43964) 3 - Washington Field (101-1381)		DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
COPIES DESTROYED <i>100 P- 117</i>			

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1953 6-26-53

~~SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL~~

WFO 101-1381

DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

On May 7, 1953, STERLING ALLEN BROWN was interviewed by Special Agent [redacted] and the writer and the results are set out below:

It is to be noted that the results of this interview are set forth in three sections, namely I. Alleged Affiliation with the Communist Party, II. Alleged Affiliation with Communist Front and Communist inspired groups, III. Miscellaneous. The organizations discussed under II are set out under subheadings and in alphabetical order.

I. ALLEGED AFFILIATION WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY

At the outset of the interview BROWN stated that he had never at any time been a Communist. He said that in the past he had thought of the Communist Party as a political party like the other political parties. He said that he had never been asked to join the Communist Party and that he would not have joined if he had been asked. In discussing his past attitude toward the Communist Party, BROWN remarked that in the past most persons were not as careful with regard to their affiliations or associations with various individuals or groups as they are today in the light of present knowledge. He mentioned that in those days he had had no ideas or thoughts concerning the existence of Soviet Atomic Espionage and similar matters.

When questioned regarding an allegation which has been made to the effect that BROWN had in the past expressed beliefs that revolution would bring a sovietized South, and that the hope for the Negro race to dominate the South lay in Communism, BROWN stated that this did not represent his views or his manner of thinking. He stated that he does not even think in those terms, that the expression "sovietized South" is not a term that he would use and that the statements attributed to him are not the type of thinking that he would express. It is to be noted that the allegation which has previously been received in connection with instant investigation as mentioned above concerning these statements reportedly made by the subject, had indicated that the subject made these statements while in a highly intoxicated condition. It is also noted that when the subject was asked about the statements, he remarked that he would not have made

statements of that kind even had he been "dead drunk". In discussing these remarks, BROWN stated that he did not desire the Negro race or any race to dominate the South. He said he thought common sense would tell him that the U. S. will never become Communist and that he does not think that the hope of the Negro race lay in any such development. He remarked it is his view that the Negroes should share in the responsibility and privileges of citizenship in a democracy, and that he had even expressed such views in writing in a work of his entitled "Count Us In". He mentioned also that he has at various times made a statement which he described as a "quip" to the effect that in order for there to be a so-called "Black Belt" in the Southern United States in which the Negroes dominate and hold all of the offices as allegedly advocated by the Communists there would first have to be a revolution, and if there were a revolution there would be no need for a "Black Belt". He pointed out he would not want to see a revolution but that what the above quoted remark meant was that if there were a hypothetical revolution there would be no necessity for any "Black Belt", but Negroes and Whites would be together on a man for man basis. He expressed the view that this idea of a self-determined "Black Belt" is "cockeyed" and that he has always known it to be such.

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He stated that certain policies which have been espoused by Communists or alleged Communist front groups have had merit in his opinion. In this connection he mentioned discrimination against Negroes with regard to union membership and similar matters. However, he stated that he did not by any means agree with Communism on the Negro question in general.

BROWN stated that his views in the above connection are substantially represented by an article which he wrote which appeared in a book entitled "What the Negro Wants". He said that in that article he had made one statement which he would not make today in the light of recent information which he had obtained by reading, and that that statement had concerned the alleged lack of race prejudice in the Soviet Union.

Subject stated that any statements he had made as favoring Russia would certainly be few in number and that he did not recall any statement of that nature other than the one referred to immediately above. He pointed out that he has not done much talking about Russia.

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He further stated that the idea of revolution does not make sense to him. He said that he is not a man of violence or revolution; that he did not desire a revolution and that he had not had any idea of a revolution coming to America in the way a revolution came to Russia. He said that he did desire certain changes in this country, and that changes of this kind are presently coming about. He said that he had never, as far as he knew, been a member of an organization advocating force and violence.

II. ALLEGED AFFILIATION WITH COMMUNIST FRONT AND COMMUNIST INSPIRED GROUPS

American League for Peace and Democracy

Concerning the American League for Peace and Democracy, subject stated that he recalled having attended one meeting sponsored by this organization; that he was sure that he had not attended many of their meetings and that it was his recollection that these meetings were open to the public. He said that it was his impression that because he was a Negro and was rather well known in literary and educational circles, the American League for Peace and Democracy had wanted to use his name. He stated that he was designated as an officer of some sort, possibly vice-president or vice-chairman. He stated that he was in favor of peace and democracy and was opposed to Fascism, and that persons he met in connection with the organization seemed to be nice people who advocated similar views. He stated that actually he had not been aware of the inner-workings of the organization.

He stated further that even after HITLER attacked Russia, and at which time Russia was an ally of the U. S., nevertheless he still had not forgotten the HITLER-STALIN Pact to which he had been and still was opposed. He said that it is his opinion that participation by the U. S. in World War II was justified and that the present Korean war is a just one on the part of the U. S. He also indicated that in spite of the fact that Russia became an ally of the U. S., he at the time looked with great disfavor upon the fact that Russia had attacked Finland.

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American Peace Mobilization

Subject stated that he had not belonged to the American Peace Mobilization or the American Peoples Mobilization, although they might have used his name.

Book Union

BROWN said that he does not remember any affiliation or association on his part with the Book Union. He said he thought the Book Union grew out of the League of American Writers and that he had found that the League of American Writers had put him on some sort of book committee. He said that he knew that he had been placed on this book committee because he was a Negro and because of his position on the faculty of Howard University. He said that he took no action as a member of such a group. He mentioned that he had bought some books through the Book Union because it was an inexpensive way to purchase some books that he wanted to read.

Commonwealth College

With regard to Commonwealth College, BROWN said that he has received a publication issued by this institution. He pointed out that because of his activity as a book reviewer, his name has been placed on various publishers' mailing lists and that he receives mail from various sources for this reason. He suggested that in this way his name might have been placed on a mailing list of Commonwealth College. He stated that also he might have been put on such a mailing list because of his expressed interest in the South and the problems of the sharecroppers. He said that through his interest in these problems he might have met persons who had taught at Commonwealth College. He said that he had not had information that Commonwealth College was subversive or Communist and that he had had an idea that it might be a Socialist institution. He said that he knew of no reason why he would have subscribed to their publication, but that if some friend had asked him to subscribe he might have done so although it was not something that he would have been anxious to subscribe to. He said that he had no recollection of reading the publication.

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Federal Workers School (United Federal Workers of America)

With regard to the Federal Workers School subject stated that he did not recall this organization; however, he recalled there was a group of some sort which might have been identical with the Federal Workers School which met in a basement on 17th Street, and that he might have given a couple of talks to this group. He said that he thought the meeting place had been on the southwest corner of 17th and F Streets, Northwest, in Washington, D. C.

Jefferson School of Social Science

With regard to the Jefferson School of Social Science, BROWN stated that he thought that he had been invited by this school to give a talk. He said that his recollection was that he had accepted the invitation, and that subsequently the school had written to him and told him that the speech was called off. BROWN said that he certainly had given no talks before the Jefferson School since that school had acquired the reputation of being subversive. He stated that he had been glad when the proposed speech had been called off because even at that time he sensed that something might be wrong about the school. He stated that he receives a very large number of requests to address school groups and that he has made a great many such talks; that it was, therefore, possible that he had spoken before such a group at some time, but that if he had ever done so he had not been aware of the nature of the group. He stated that he had never taught any series of classes at the Jefferson School. He said that he did not believe it likely that he could have been addressing such a group without being aware of the nature of his audience because he would have been alerted by the type of questions which would have been asked him by students in the audience.

League of American Writers

Subject stated that he recalled an occasion in the late 1930s when he had attended a gathering sponsored by the League of American Writers, at which time he had been asked to say a few words and he had given a five minute talk on folklore. He said that it was his belief that the organization had held at least three such

gatherings and that he had attended the first one and probably the third. He did not recall the exact dates. He said that the League had put his name on its board of directors or some similar group, and that he had taken no action in this connection. He pointed out that at that time, being interested in literary affairs, he had very seldom seen an author in person and that he had attended these gatherings with the idea of seeing various prominent writers.

National Negro Congress

BROWN stated that he had never had what he described as a "tight affiliation" with the National Negro Congress. He said that the person whom he understood to be in charge of it was [redacted] and that when he, BROWN, first went into the organization he had liked the idea of Negro groups becoming organized. He said that he made speeches for the National Negro Congress, giving talks on such subjects as the "Negro in Literature". He said that he heard about a conflict within the National Negro Congress over the subject of Communism, but that he, himself, had taken no part in this fight. He said that one day he met [redacted] on the street at which time [redacted] had expressed the opinion that BROWN was well off financially and had asked him for a contribution at which time BROWN said he gave him two dollars. BROWN stated that this incident probably occurred subsequently to the time of the above mentioned fight in the National Negro Congress over the matter of Communism.

He acknowledged that he acceded to requests to the National Negro Congress that he give talks, but that he never would have associated the National Negro Congress in his mind with Soviet Russia.

Negro Quarterly

With regard to the allegation that he had contributed an article to the first issue of "Negro Quarterly", BROWN said that this publication had asked him to submit something and that he had submitted an

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article on the subject of the "Negro Author and his Publisher". He pointed out that he had already written and presented this article as a talk at a meeting of the teachers of English in Negro colleges, which he indicated he considered a conservative group. He said that it was his belief that the editors of "Negro Quarterly" had read the published version of this talk and had asked him if they could use it. He stated that it appeared in the initial issue of "Negro Quarterly" and that he had not known previously what individuals would be represented in this magazine. He pointed out that he had not taken the initiative in offering the article to the "Negro Quarterly". Also in this connection he mentioned that available publication outlets for Negroes are very few in number and that an author naturally is desirous of seeing his work in print.

New Masses

Subject stated that he subscribed to the "New Masses" at the time he finished college. He stated that he was in a Theological School in Virginia where there were very few magazines or books available. He was interested in American life and publications, and he subscribed to all kinds of magazines including religious and philosophical journals which opened a new world to him. He said that a poem of his had appeared in the "New Masses", and, also, according to his recollection, one or two book reviews. He stated that he did not remember what book or books he had reviewed in this connection.

With regard to his knowledge of the nature of the "New Masses", BROWN stated that he thought that he would have known at that time of the Communist relationship on the part of the "New Masses". He said that he would not have known at that time the "New Masses" was officially connected with the Communist Party but that he could read and understand that the magazine was connected with Communism, although he never quite equated the "New Masses" with the Communist Party.

Subject mentioned that he had been one of the editors of an anthology entitled "Negro Caravan". He said that the most unfavorable review of this book appeared

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in the "New Masses" according to his recollection. He said that the "New Masses" review contained praise for the book, but on the other hand attacked the book *Grey* for its handling of the Negro question.

Also in the above connection, BROWN stated that the editors of "New Masses" had asked the three editors of "Negro Caravan" to participate in a panel discussion to defend their views on the Negro question, but that he and the other editors of "Negro Caravan" did not even consider accepting this invitation.

Subject stated that it was his recollection that the writing of certain persons whose work had appeared in other publications and who were in his opinion anti-Communist, had appeared on occasions in the "New Masses".

Subject stated that his recollection was that a poem of his own relating to sharecropping had been published in the "New Masses". He mentioned that this poem had subsequently appeared in a book. Subject said he is currently opposed to the policies of the "New Masses", and regrets that his poem appeared in its pages.

As to the time when he became aware that the "New Masses" was rather closely tied in with Communism, subject stated that his recollection was that he reached this awareness at the end of the 1930s.

With regard to a dinner in New York in 1946, sponsored by the "New Masses", at which time subject was presented with an award, subject stated that he had attended this dinner although at that time he had had qualms about doing so. He expressed the opinion that he had been sponsored for this award not through any connection with "New Masses" but because he was the first member of the Negro race to teach at Vassar College. Subject stated that upon receiving notification of the award he did not know what action to take. He said that he did not know then the things that he now knows, and, also, he did not know who was going to be present at the above described dinner. He mentioned that a considerable number of other persons received awards also on the same occasion, at which time a Negro actor read a poem of the subject's entitled the "Strong Man", which subject stated was not Communist in nature. He pointed

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out that certain highly reputable persons had received awards on the same occasion, and that he had attended although friends of his had advised him not to do so. He said that in connection with his position on the Vassar Faculty, he had received approximately four awards from various sources, and that he is inclined by nature to be polite in accepting honors that are offered to him rather than declining them with a statement that he does not subscribe to the views of the person extending the honor or award. Subject stated that he had had no previous knowledge of who was to attend the dinner.

Washington Bookshop Association

Concerning his past attendance at meetings sponsored by the Washington Bookshop Association, subject stated that he had attended such meetings in order to hear musical or literary works in which he was interested. He said that his connection with the Washington Bookshop Association was not merely a matter of buying books at a discount. He stated that the association had been interested in the sale of an anthology, "Negro Caravan", of which he was one of the editors. He also mentioned that he had given talks before gatherings sponsored by the Washington Bookshop Association. He recalled having given a talk on the subject "What the Negro Wants" at the Phyllis-Wheatley Y.W.C.A. in Washington, D. C. on one occasion. In this connection he expressed the view that sponsorship of this meeting by the Washington Bookshop Association was not particularly significant. He said that he had been asked to make "a talk at the Y"; that the talk was related to a book compiled by a friend of his and that he, BROWN, had agreed to make the talk. He said that he had not indiscriminately attended all gatherings of the Washington Bookshop Association. He said that after the association had been listed by the Attorney General as subversive he would not have given a talk under its sponsorship, not because of cowardice on his part but because the organization has been proven subversive. Subject stated that he did not know the details of how the organization came to be called subversive. In discussing the Bookshop Association he also mentioned that as a faculty member of Howard University he receives a great many invitations to address various groups.

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Washington Committee for Democratic Action

Subject stated that he never belonged to the Washington Committee for Democratic Action.

III. MISCELLANEOUS

With regard to the Dr. W. E. B. DU BOIS testimonial dinner held in New York City, February 23, 1951, BROWN stated that he did not attend this dinner but was one of the sponsors. He said that he had allowed his name to be used as a sponsor and had given what ever amount of money was involved, although he had never intended to be present at the dinner. BROWN stated that he was not a "dupe" in allowing his name to be used in connection with this dinner, and that he is not presently in accord with DU BOIS's views. He stated that the chairman of the dinner was a man whom he liked and that in acting as a sponsor, he BROWN, was not sponsoring "the present DU BOIS". He said that it is his opinion that DU BOIS today is a lonely man who is in need of flattery and that the Communists are flattering him. BROWN said that it was not DU BOIS's current views that attract BROWN's generation of Negroes to him. BROWN said that in the old days DU BOIS was "progressive, militant and honest" and could not be bought, and that he had spoken out for first class citizenship for the Negro. Subsequently, BROWN stated the Communist were able to influence DU BOIS. BROWN stated that he had been sponsoring the DU BOIS he had known in college and with whom he had taught. He said that DU BOIS's recent books are wrong and that DU BOIS is aware of this opinion on his part.

Subject stated that he recalls having attended the meeting in New York City of the Association Democratique Haitienne and also the Friends of JACQUES ROUMAIN, although he was not a member of that association. Subject stated that JACQUES ROUMAIN was a Haitian poet who had visited subject when he had been in the U. S. Subject did not recall the dates of the visit or visits. He pointed out that many writers and editors from the West Indies have seen his, BROWN's, name in print and take the opportunity to visit him when they come to the U. S., and that these persons are of varying opinions and beliefs. BROWN stated that it was his understanding that ROUMAIN was protesting against a government in Haiti concerning which BROWN had heard much unfavorable information. BROWN stated that he did not know of any Communist movement in Haiti, and he does not know of ROUMAIN was ever a Communist. He described ROUMAIN as a nice person who was embittered. He stated that he never thought of Communism in connection with ROUMAIN.

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Subject stated that he had been asked to give a talk on the occasion of the above mentioned dinner in New York and that he did not recall the subject of the talk. He remarked that Communism was not the theme of the meeting and that he had not considered it in any way a Communist group. He pointed out that a great many people attended who, in his opinion, have no political connections and who were prominent in various fields of endeavor.

With regard to the sale of works written or edited by the subject by the Bookshops having affiliations with the Communist Party or Communist Front groups, such as the Workers Bookshop, BROWN stated that he had never been approached by representatives of any such Bookshops in connection with the sale of his writings. b6 b7C

IV. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The following physical description of the subject was obtained by personal observation:

Name:	STERLING ALLEN BROWN
Date of Birth:	May 1, 1901
Place of Birth:	Washington, D. C.
Race:	Negro
Complexion:	Very light tan
Height:	5'11"
Weight:	Approximately 195 lbs.
Build:	Medium--stocky
Hair:	Black, graying
Unusual characteristics:	Wears rimless glasses

Residence:	1222 Kearney Street, N. E., Washington, D. C.
Employment:	Professor, Howard University, Washington, D. C.

Phone 1311

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ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

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THE WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

*Will submit amended administrative pages reflecting documentation information requested of the Chicago and Little Rock Offices.

REFERENCE: Report of Special Agent [redacted]
dated March 30, 1953, at Washington, D. C.

Report of Special Agent [redacted]
dated March 30, 1953, at New York City.

SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL

Assistant Attorney General
Warren Olney III
Criminal Division

June 9, 1953

Director, FBI

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STERLING ALLEN BROWN
SECURITY MATTER - C
LABOR - FEDERAL SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 1953
FBI File 100-43964

Reference is made to the Department's G.I.R.-5 letter of January 19, 1953, concerning employees of Howard University, Washington, D. C.

Sterling Allen Brown is one of the individuals presently employed at Howard University.

There is enclosed for your information and in order that consideration may be given as to whether any Federal laws have been violated one copy of a report by Special Agent [redacted] dated May 18, 1953, at Washington, D. C., concerning the captioned subject.

An investigative report by Special Agent [redacted] dated March 30, 1953, at Washington, D. C., concerning Brown has previously been furnished to the Records Administration Branch. Copies of these reports have been furnished to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Based upon available information no further investigation of the subject will be undertaken at this time unless advised to the contrary by you.

Enclosure

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SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL

RECORDED 59
101-43964

June 9, 1953

BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

[Redacted]
Department of Health, Education
and Welfare
Washington 25, D. C.

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Dear [Redacted]

Reference is made to a memorandum from this Bureau dated January 30, 1953, furnishing to your Agency information concerning Sterling Allen Brown.

There is enclosed for your information one copy each of the following reports concerning this individual.

Report of Special Agent [Redacted]
dated May 18, 1953, at Washington, D. C.

Report of Special Agent [Redacted]
dated March 30, 1953, at New York, New York.

Report of Special Agent Seymour [Redacted]
dated March 30, 1953, at Washington, D. C.

The above information is furnished for your confidential use only and is not to be disseminated outside your Agency. This information is not to be considered as a clearance or nonclearance of the individual involved.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

BY SPL MSGR.

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Enclosure

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ON 4-18-97
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